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Relation between quality of attachment and life satisfaction in high school administrators

Ali Akbar Haddadi Koohsar^a, Bagher Ghobary Bonab*

^aUniversity of Tehran, Faculty of Psychology&Education, Ale Ahmad Ave, Tehran,P.O.Box.14155-6456, Iran

^bUniversity of Tehran, Faculty of Psychology&Education, Ale Ahmad Ave, Tehran,P.O.Box.14155-6456, Iran

Abstract

This study examined the relationship between attachment styles and life satisfaction in high school administrators. In this study 88 high school administrators (43 men and 45 women) at the City of Tabriz in Iran were voluntarily selected. They completed the measures of Revised Adult Attachment Scale (Collins, 1996), and The Satisfaction with life Scale (Diener et al., 1985). Analysis of data with utilization of multiple regression analyses revealed that life satisfaction of high school administrators can be predicted from the magnitude of their quality of attachment. Moreover, data revealed that high school administrators with anxious attachment were lower in life satisfaction than individuals with a secure attachment style. Individuals who could depend attachment (dependability of others) on their couples and find them available were higher in life satisfaction. Author concluded that secure attachment style was associated with higher life satisfaction in high school administrators.

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1. Introduction

Life satisfaction has been defined as a cognitive appraisal of one's satisfaction with her or his life as a whole (Diener, 1994) several internal and external factors are related to individual's appraisal of their life as a satisfactory or dissatisfactory experience. Among these factors studies have focused on examining demographic, environmental, and interpersonal correlates. In general, demographic variables are weak predictors of individual's global life satisfaction (Dew & Huebner, 1994; Gilman & Huebner, 1997; Huebner, Drane & Valois, 2000) than Environmental factors such as neighbourhood experience (Morris & Winter, 1978).

Chronic and acute life events (Ash & Huebner, 2002) are significant moderating variables of individuals' life satisfactions stronger predictors of life satisfaction involve interpersonal relationship variables. Researchers found individuals attachment orientation to be a strong predictor of the reported life satisfaction (Nickerson & Nagle, 2005). Sumer and Knight (2001) found that attachment security is associated with higher job and life satisfaction. Attachment security may lead to a stable and satisfactory relation with others and create a chain of success in interpersonal relationship that improves individual appraisal of their life satisfaction.

* Ali Akbar Haddadi Koohsar. Tel.: +98-912-695-6577; fax: +98-21-882-54734

E-mail address: yamola280@yahoo.com (A.A Haddadi Koohsar), bghobari@ut.ac.ir (B.Ghobary Bonab).

Attachment theory can serve as a theoretical framework to study significant relationship which include parent and peer relationships (Ainsworth, 1989; Nickerson & Nagle, 2005). According to Bowlby (1988) attachment is adaptive and significant because it involves a process of natural selection that yields to survival advantage. From early experiences between infants and caregivers, infants are believed to adapt to caregivers' behavioral patterns and to develop internal mental representations of themselves, and their surroundings. In this manner, experience with caregivers influences the degree to which infants become securely attached to their caregivers. In addition to parental attachment orientation, Peers interactions mold and modify individuals' internal working model of self and others. During the adulthood internal working model are shaped by parents, peer interactions, and are more resilient to change. Studies show that individuals who have a secure attachment orientation are higher in life satisfaction and lower in psychological distress (Bradford & Lyddon, 1994). Research also has provided evidence for positive associations between both parent and peer attachment relationship and their levels of life satisfaction.

Furthermore, research show that individuals with a secure attachment are higher in life satisfaction (Feeney, 1999). But individuals with avoidant attachment are lower life satisfaction and commitment to the enduring relationship (Simpson, 1990). Pistol (1989) examined the impact of attachment orientation conflict resolution and satisfaction in interpersonal relation, he conclude that individuals with a secure attachment orientation enjoyed more satisfactory relation, and were more competent in conflict resolution than anxious individuals. Kirkpatrick and shaver (1992) showed that individuals with an avoidant attachment were higher in mental health problems, and their levels of life satisfaction were lower.

Sharon and Wendy (2009) showed that individuals with anxious and avoidant attachment were lower in life satisfaction. Bethany and Lorne (2008) studied the relation between attachment orientation and life satisfaction; they concluded that adults with avoidant and anxious attachment orientation were lower in life satisfaction. Further studies show association between attachment orientation and life satisfaction (Chris, Robberts & Mirjam, 2009; Claudia & Scott, 2008; Kafetsios & Sideride, 2006).

Although research findings show that quality of attachment is related to life satisfaction, most of these investigations have been conducted in the United States and European countries. Since people in Iran are different from Americans and European countries in terms of their cultural and religious backgrounds, investigating the relation of these constructs in individuals who live in Iran is necessary. This study fills the existing gap in the area.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Population in the current study was consisted of high school administrators in Tabriz City in Iran. A sampling procedure of voluntary selection was utilized in this study and 88 high school administrators between 24-50 years were selected as a sample. In this study 53% of the participants were female, and 47% of them were male, 15% were single, in Tabriz City, and 26% were from other major cities. After preparation of assessment devices, questionnaires were administered on high school administrators by a trained research assistant. Permission of instructors was sought to distribute questionnaires at the high school. All instructors that we contacted had a good cooperation. In general 88 individuals completed the questionnaires.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Revised Adult Attachment Scale (RAAS; Collins, 1996).

We used the Farsi version of the RAAS (Haddadi Koohsar, 2010). This scale is consisted of 18 items and three subscales 1) *Discomfort with dependency*, higher scores in this subscale reflect greater discomfort depending on others. 2) *The discomfort with closeness scale*, higher scores in this subscale reflect greater discomfort with closeness and intimacy, and, 3) *The anxious subscale*, higher scores in this subscale reflect stronger fear of being rejected or unloved. Internal consistency for all subscales has been calculated in a high level: alpha coefficients for discomfort with closeness was 0.82, for discomfort with dependency was estimated 0.80, and for the anxious

subscale was 0.83 (Collins, 1996). In the current investigation alpha coefficient for the close, depend, and anxious subscales was 0.48, 0.55, and 0.79 respectively.

2.2.2. Satisfaction with life Scale (SWLS ; Diener et al., 1985)

The SWLS consists of statements relating to global life satisfaction to which participants respond on a seven point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). Diener et al., (1985) have reported evidence of discriminate and convergent validity for the SWLS, and high internal consistency (Cronbach alpha = 0.87). In the present study, we obtained Cronbach alphas value 0.81 for full scale.

3. Results

The results have been presented in the following tables:

Table 1. Matrix of correlation between attachment styles and life satisfaction in high school administrators

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3
1.SWLS-life satisfaction	23.86	5.47	-		
2.RAAS-Close Attachment	20.51	2.70	0.05	-	
3.RAAS-Depend Attachment	22.33	4.36	0.36**	0.26*	-
4.RAAS-Anxious Attachment	19.57	4.05	-0.14	0.19*	-0.23*

** P < 0.01 * P < 0.05

Table 1 shows that depend Attachment (dependability of others) is associated with life satisfaction in high school administrators. Individuals who show a depend Attachment were higher in life satisfaction.

Table 2. Multiple regression analysis method to predict life satisfaction from attachment styles in high school administrators

Variables		R	R ²	F	P	B	SEB	β
Dependent	Predictor							
SWLS-life satisfaction	Stepwise Regression	0.36	0.13	11.47	0.001			
	Depend Attachment					0.45**	0.13	0.36

0/01 * \underline{P} < 0/05

** \underline{P} <

As indicated in table 2 only depend (dependability of others) attachment is significant predictors of life satisfaction ($R^2 = 13\%$). In other words life satisfaction of high school administrators with depend attachment were higher than other high school administrators. Inspecting beta analysis shows that depend attachment can positively predicts magnitude of life satisfaction in high school administrators.

4. Discussion

In the current study relation between attachment styles and life satisfaction in high school administrators has been investigated. Results of multiple regression analysis indicated that life satisfaction in high school administrators can be predicted by their attachment styles. Individuals, who hold a secure attachment style, are higher in life satisfaction in compare to others. The results of the current study are consistent with some other investigation (e.g., Sumer and Knight, 2001; Nickerson & Nagle, 2005; Feeney, 1999; Kirkpatrick and Shaver, 1992; Chris et al., 2009; Claudia & Scott, 2008; Kafetsios & Sideride, 2006).

Researchers found individuals' attachment orientation to be a strong predictor of the reported life satisfaction (Nickerson & Nagle, 2005). Sumer and Knight (2001) found that attachment security is associated with higher job and life satisfaction. Attachment security may lead to a stable and satisfactory relation with others and create a chain of success in interpersonal relationship that improves individual appraisal of their life satisfaction.

Chronic and acute life events (Ash & Huebner, 2002) are significant but moderate predictors of individuals' life satisfactions stronger predictors involve interpersonal relationship variables. Researchers found individuals' attachment orientation to be a strong predictor of the reported life satisfaction (Nickerson & Nagle, 2005). Sumer and Knight (2001) found that attachment security is associated with higher job and life satisfaction. Attachment

security may lead to a stable and satisfactory relation with others and create a chain of success in interpersonal relationship that improves individual appraisals of their life satisfaction.

Furthermore, research show that individuals with a secure attachment are higher in life satisfaction (Feeney, 1999). But individuals with avoidant attachment are lower life satisfaction and commitment to the enduring relationship (Simpson, 1990). Pistor (1989) examined the impact of attachment orientation conflict resolution and satisfaction in interpersonal relation, he conclude that individuals with a secure attachment orientation enjoyed more satisfactory relation, and were more competent in conflict resolution than anxious individuals. Kirkpatrick and Shaver (1992) showed that individuals with an avoidant attachment were higher in mental health problems, and their levels of life satisfaction were lower. Sharon and Wendy (2009) showed that individuals with anxious and avoidant attachment were lower in life satisfaction. Bethany and Lorne (2008) studied the relation between attachment orientation and life satisfaction; they concluded that adults with avoidant and anxious attachment orientation were lower in life satisfaction. Further studies show association between attachment orientation and life satisfaction (Chris, Robberts & Mirjam, 2009; Claudia & Scott, 2008; Kafetsios & Sideridis, 2006).

These findings are consistent with result of the current study. Since the current study was an ex post facto research developing a causal relation between attachment styles and life satisfaction was not possible. Investigators in the future can design an experimental design in which environmental prompting instigate the attachment styles in individuals, and study their consequence in development or escalation of life satisfaction.

Review of literature show that magnitude of life satisfaction is associated with secure attachment style. Current study has implications for prevention, and interventions of life satisfaction in individuals. Improvement of individuals' attachment style yields to enhancement in their life satisfaction.

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